

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

—●—
EMBELLISHED WITH NUMEROUS COLORED
ENGRAVINGS.



HARRISBURG, PA.
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY G. S. PETERS.

CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION

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No burial this pretty pair
Of any man receives,
Till Robin-red-breast painfully
Did cover them with leaves.

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BERNARD M. MECKS

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THE
CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

NOW ponder well, you parents dear,
These words which I shall write ;
A doleful story you shall hear,
In time brought forth to light :

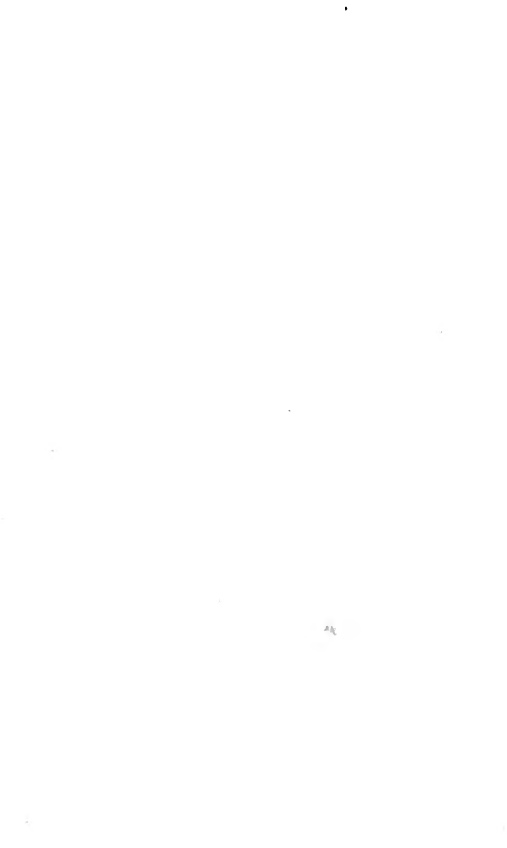
A gentleman of good account,
In Norfolk dwelt of late,
Who did in honor far surmount
Most men of his estate.

Sore sick he was, and like to die,
No help his life could save ;
His wife by him as sick did lie,
And both possess'd one grave.



"Now, brother," said the dying man,
"Look to my children dear;
Be good unto my boy and girl,
No friends else have they here."





No love between these two was lost,
Each was to other kind ;
In love they lived, in love they died,
And left two babes behind :

The one a fine and pretty boy
Not passing three years old,
The other a girl more young than he,
And fram'd in beauty's mould :

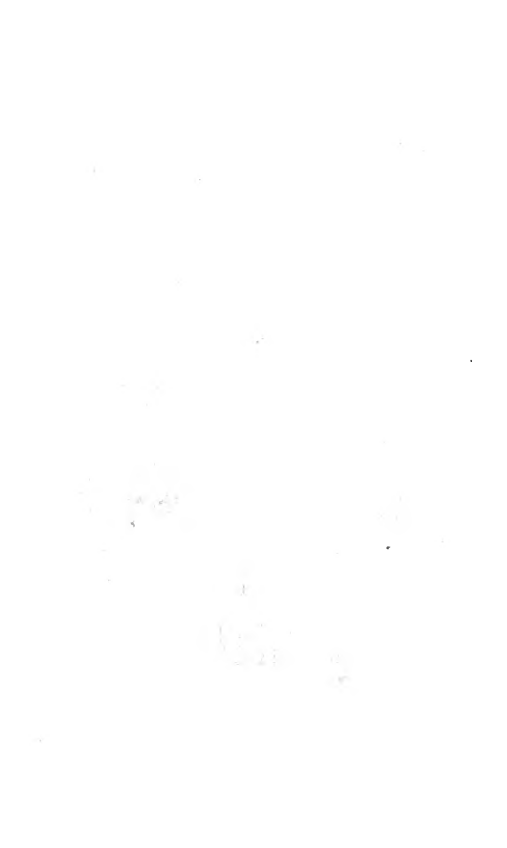
The father left his little son,
As plainly doth appear,
When he to perfect age should come,
Three hundred pounds a year.

And to his little daughter Jane,
Five hundred pounds in gold,
To be paid down on marriage-day,
Which might not be controll'd ;



He bargain'd with two ruffians strong,
Which were of furious mood,
That they should take these children young,
And slay them in a wood.





But if the children chance to die,
Ere they to age should come,
Their uncle should possess their wealth,
For so the will did run.

“Now, brother,” said the dying man,
“Look to my children dear,
Be good unto my boy and girl,
No friends else have they here:

To God and you I recommend
My children dear this day,
But little while be sure we have
Within this world to stay.

You must be father and mother both,
And uncle all in one:
God knows what will become of them,
When I am dead and gone.”



And he that was of mildest mood,
Did slay the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood,
While babes did quake for fear.





With that bespake their mother dear :

“O brother kind,” quoth she,
“You are the man must bring our babes
To wealth or misery.

And if you keep them carefully,
Then God will you reward ;
But if you otherwise should deal,
God will your deeds regard.”

With lips as cold as any stone
They kiss’d their children small :
“God bless you both, my children dear ;”
With that the tears did fall.

These speeches then their brother spake,
To this sick couple there :
“The keeping of your children small,
Sweet sister, do not fear ;

God never prosper me nor mine,
Nor aught else that I have,
If I do wrong your children dear,
When you are laid in grave."

The parents being dead and gone,
The children home he takes,
And brings them strait unto his house,
Where much of them he makes.

He had not kept these pretty babes
A twelvemonth and a day,
But, for their wealth, he did devise,
To make them both away.

He bargain'd with two ruffians strong,
Which were of furious mood,
That they should take the children young,
And slay them in a wood :

And told his wife and all he had,
He did the children send
To be brought up in fair London,
With one that was his friend.

Away then went these pretty babes,
Rejoicing at that tide,
Rejoicing with a merry mind,
They should on cock-horse ride.

They prate and prattle pleasantly,
As they rode on the way,
To those that should their butchers be,
And work their lives decay.

So that the pretty speech they had,
Made murther's heart relent,
And they that undertook the deed,
Full sore did now repent.



These pretty babes, with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down
But never more did see the man
Approaching from the town.

3



Yet one of them, more hard of heart,
Did vow to do his charge,
Because the wretch that hired him,
Had paid him very large.

The other won't agree thereto ;
So here they fell to strive,
With one another they did fight,
About the children's life :

And he that was of mildest mood,
Did slay the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood,
While babes did quake for fear

He took the children by the hand,
Tears standing in their eye,
And bade them straitway fallow him,
And look they did not cry.



Their uncle having died in jail,
Where he for debt was laid.





And two long miles he led them on,
While they for bread complain ;
“Stay here,” quoth he, “I’ll bring you some
When I come back again.”

These pretty babes, with hand in hand,
Went wandering up and down ;
But never more could see the man
Approaching from the town :

Their pretty lips with black-berries,
Where all besmear’d and dyed,
And when they saw the darksome night,
They sat them down and cry’d.

Thus wandered these two little babes,
Till death did end their grief,
In one another’s arms they died,
As babes wanting relief:

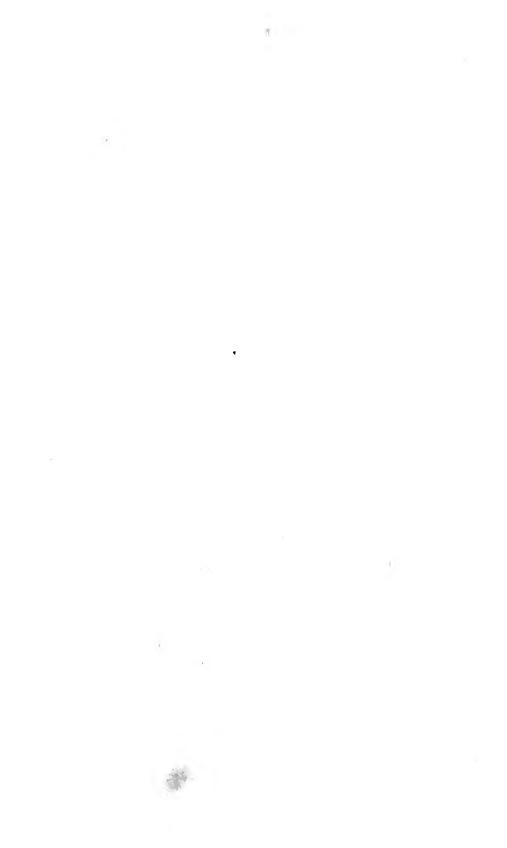
No burial this pretty pair
Of any man receives,
Till Robin-red-breast painfully
Did cover them with leaves.

And now the heavy wrath of God
Upon their uncle fell ;
Yea, fearful fiends did hunt his house,
His conscience felt a hell :

His barns were fir'd, his goods consum'd,
His lands were barren made,
His cattle died within the field,
And nothing with him stay'd.

And on a voyage to Portugal,
Two of his sons did die ;
And to conclude, himself was brought
To want and misery :





He pawn'd and mortgag'd all his land
Ere seven years came about;
And now at length this wicked act
Did by this means come out:

The fellow that did take in hand
These children for to kill,
Was for a robbery judged to die,
(Such was God's blessed will;)

Who did confess the very truth,
As here hath been display'd:
Their uncle having died in jail,
Where he for debt was laid.

You that executors be made,
And overseers eke,
Of children that be fatherless,
And infants mild and meek;

Take you example by this thing,
And yield to each his right,
Lest God with such like misery,
Your wicked minds requite.



